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## WHERE ARE THE WEAPONS?

October 2, 2003

Ray Suarez follows up on the Kay testimony with two members of the House Intelligence Committee: Reps. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.) and Rush Holt (D-N.J.).

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RAY SUAREZ: Joining me are members of the House Intelligence Committee. Congressman Peter Hoekstra, Republican of Michigan. And Rush Holt, Democrat of New Jersey. Representative Hoekstra, let me start with you. Granted this is an interim report, but what's your reaction to it and what did find significant about what David Kay had to say?

REP. PETER HOEKSTRA: Well, I think this is the fourth time that I've had the opportunity to be briefed by Dr. Kay. What I'm most impressed with is the professionalism that he's approaching this. He's saying, I've set a very high standard before I make any conclusions. I want the physical evidence. I want the documentation. And I want the Iraqis who were working on the program. And when I have all three of those pieces together, then I will come back to Congress, then I will come back to the president and to the American people with the conclusion. So he's going through this in a very methodical and a very professional way. Today he told us the progress that he's made but he has made no or very few conclusions.

RAY SUAREZ: Anything jump out at you from what you've heard so far?

REP. PETER HOEKSTRA: Well, I mean there's I think a lot of leads that he's following up on that need to be followed up on. The whole biological weapons area, some very troubling things that are even in the public portion of the report specifically the references to human testing.

RAY SUAREZ: And, Congressman Holt, what did you make of what you heard and read and what do you think are some of the more significant findings in the interim report?

REP. RUSH HOLT: Well, I think that Dr. Kay and the 1200 people working him are doing a very professional job as Peter Hoekstra just said and are doing a thorough job. I must say that the qualified and tentative statements of Dr. Kay stand in stark contrast to the assertions of, well, for example, Vice President Cheney who said that Saddam had reconstituted the nuclear weapons program or the president who said we have found weapons of mass destruction. I think the bottom line is that however thorough he is-- and we want him to continue with the same degree of thoroughness-- we don't need the report from Dr. Kay to

know because all the world knows that we did not have specific and precise information about weapons of mass destruction. If we had, the soldiers would have cordoned them off, bottled them up and Dr. Kay would not be left with sites that are looted and evidence that's dispersed.

RAY SUAREZ: One of the things, Congressman Holt, that he goes into some detail in, in the public portion of the report, the one that I could read, is about how many of the computers were sanitized, many of the files destroyed, many of the information sinks simply carried away. Were you aware that the control over this information on the part of the U.S. Military was like this?

REP. RUSH HOLT: Well, I think it's... I think that the key phrases-- let me refer to the nuclear parts because, as a physicist, this is the part that I know best-- Dr. Kay says, very conditional statements, qualified statements. "Saddam would have resumed nuclear weapons development at some future point." Or he found small and relatively unsophisticated research initiatives -- or, referring to Dr. Said, who worked for Saddam Hussein, that Dr. Said was considering a restart of uranium enrichment. These are all very qualified things. No doubt there was some deception and denial going on. Saddam Hussein ran a very secretive, closed society.

RAY SUAREZ: Congressman Hoekstra, were you surprised by any of the findings about how the information, the databases in Iraq, were controlled after the invasion was complete?

REP. PETER HOEKSTRA: Well, I don't think it's the issue of the databases and the perhaps some of the sites being under the control of the U.S. Military after the invasion and after the invasion and the occupation of Baghdad and Iraq were complete. I think you also have to take a real look at this. What we have here is one of the most advertised wars in history. Saddam, Iraq, knew that this was coming. They had spent 12 years practicing denial and deception. They had five or six months before the Americans and the coalition moved in to Iraq to either... to even further bury their programs and to hide them. You know, Dr. Kay, you're exactly right, he went into extreme depth as to how Saddam and how the Hussein regime, you know, sanitized everything. I think in some cases it's rather remarkable that Dr. Kay has found as much as he has found in the last three months given the time and the focus that the regime had on hiding everything that they were doing.

RAY SUAREZ: But with what's been lost already, do you still feel pretty confident that he at some point will be able to nail it down and say definitively what there was, what there wasn't?

REP. PETER HOEKSTRA: It's one of the things that I'm concerned about. You know, a lot of this information has been lost. I think this is why the job that Dr. Kay is going on right now so very, very difficult. He has to connect a lot of dots and put together a lot of pieces of the puzzle where pieces of this puzzle are missing and they will never be recovered. He has established a very high standard for making declarative statements. I think that this report is very different than some of the things that have happened before.

This is the definitive report based on us having full access of going into Iraq without, you know, cutting through the denial and deception. It will be a tough job, but I've got a very high degree of confidence that they're going to be able to put together a good piece of this puzzle by the time that they're done.

RAY SUAREZ: What about you, Congress Holt, do you have the same degree of confidence?

REP. RUSH HOLT: There are a lot of people out there including some of my colleagues here in Congress who actually seem disappointed that Dr. Kay and his team have not yet found weapons of mass destruction. You know, the best outcome for the world would be if it's determined that there were no weapons of mass destruction, are no weapons of mass destruction, have not been for the past ten years, that would be the best outcome for the world. It may not be the best outcome for the administration politically but that's... you know, I think we shouldn't be disappointed if Dr. Kay does not find the weapons there.

RAY SUAREZ: One of the things he noted in the report is that he's having trouble getting cooperation from Iraqi weapons scientists. Right now the interim government is arresting them. Is that an approach that seems to be working so far from what you can see?

REP. RUSH HOLT: I can't talk about specific cases. I do believe that Dr. Kay has learned a lot from interrogation. As he pointed out a few moments ago, he is rather than just wandering around the country, he is using human sources. I gather he's using them quite effectively combined with search for physical evidence. So, I think perhaps the fear of Saddam has subsided enough that some of these people will talk.

RAY SUAREZ: Congressman Hoekstra, would you ask Americans to reserve judgment at this point based on what you heard in the briefings and based on what the public is able to know from the interim report?

REP. PETER HOEKSTRA: Oh, absolutely. That's exactly what Dr. Kay has asked for. That's what Dr. Kay asked the president for is, you know, have some patience. Let us go through this process. Let us complete this process. It's important that we get the information right. It's going to take time. I mean the reason that some of these Iraqi scientists are not talking, if there is clear evidence that they were involved in human testing, the use of biological or chemical weapons against humans purely for testing purposes, these folks are going to face some very, very tough, you know, criminal sanctions by the world community, and so it is going to be very difficult to break through that process to get the information.

He is finding mid-level, lower level people who are involved in these programs, and they are the ones that are going to probably be the ones that put together the pieces so that we can get an accurate idea as to exactly what was going on. It's going to take time. We've got to get the right information.

REP. RUSH HOLT: Probably the most important thing that will come out of this will be an understanding of a very high standard of intelligence about other countries that must be met if there is going to be preventive and preemptive invasions. That's a standard that I question can ever be met. It certainly wasn't met in this case.

RAY SUAREZ: So you still feel good about your vote authorizing Operation Iraqi Freedom?

REP. RUSH HOLT: I think that it becomes more and more apparent that it was not an imminent threat to the American people, to the neighbors, to the world at large by Saddam

Hussein in March of 2003. In fact, one of the things that Mr. Kay makes clear in his report is that sanctions and inspections were working during the period of '91 through '98.

RAY SUAREZ: And Congressman Hoekstra, on that same point, do you feel the same about the vote you made to authorize military action in Iraq?

REP. PETER HOEKSTRA: Yes, and I'm very disappointed in how my colleague is characterizing Dr. Kay's report today. Dr. Kay has asked for patience. He has clearly outlined that he is not making a declarative statement and hasn't been requested to make one until he gets all of the information. We don't know what he is going to find and he has been very, very open and clear that he is going to let the truth lead his investigation.

What I'm very cautious about is making a declarative statement that the vote was right or wrong based on the evidence that was available or that is available at this point in time. I think that that is... when Dr. Kay's final work is done, at that point in time we can start saying, wow, the intelligence was right or it was really wrong and we got to go back and evaluate it. But to use Dr. Kay's interim report to say, see, I told you so, the stuff wasn't there, is not an accurate or not how Dr. Kay is intending this report to be used.

RAY SUAREZ: Gentlemen, we're going to have to end it there.

REP. RUSH HOLT: That's not what I said, Peter. We're pleased that Mr. Kay will let the truth guide it.



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